

Remarks/Arguments:

With the present response, claims 31-39 are pending. The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 36-39 are allowed.

Claim rejections

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 31-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,015,429 to Lau et al. ("Lau"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 31 recites, *inter alia*, a method for manufacturing a multi-lumen tubular supporting component for an endoluminal graft, comprising the steps of forming a tubular support component; and *creasing at least one longitudinal portion of said tubular supporting component* after forming the tubular support component to form at least one longitudinally disposed indent therein *to provide a multiple-lumen portion* of said tubular supportive component. (emphasis added).

The meaning of the word, "creasing" is clear from the current specification. Note column 15, lines 45 - 47 of U.S. Patent No. 5,855,598 (an earlier patent in this family), which recites, "FIG. 26 illustrates a fixture suitable for use in forming the indent or indents as permanent deformations of the braided mesh cylinder" Note also column 16, lines 10 - 14, which recites, "[i]n a preferred arrangement for this embodiment, the thus deformed braided tubular supportive component is chemically and heat processed in order to set the desired diameter and mechanical properties of the main body." Furthermore, the ordinary plain meaning of the word, "crease" supports the conclusion that it means the formation of a line along which the crease was made.

In order to anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. §102, the reference must teach every element of the claim. M.P.E.P. §2131. Furthermore, "the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236 (Fed. Cir. 1989) and M.P.E.P. §2131.

The Office Action recites FIG. 15E of Lau as disclosing a tubular component 230 that is folded such that it allegedly forms a triple lumen portioned device. The Office Action also alleges that Fig. 22 shows that the tubular device is "folded or creased such

that it forms quadruple lumen portions." Office Action, page 2, last paragraph. Applicants respectfully traverse this interpretation of Lau. Lau does not teach creasing anything.

Lau discloses "a sequence of folding the device (230) . . . into a triple *lobed* configuration." Col. 16, lines 47-49. (emphasis added). Further, "FIG. 22 merely depicts the use of *multiple stent folds*." Col. 18, line 38. FIGS. 15E and 22 of Lau each disclose a *single lumen* stent that is folded into a single lumen stent with multiple lobes prior to insertion, after which it is expanded into its full single lumen orientation.

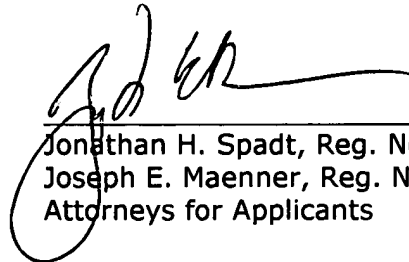
Further, and contrary to the claim language of "creasing at least one longitudinal portion of said tubular supporting component," Lau discloses that his stent-graft is "unfolded against the vessel lumen" and that folding the stent in the manner described "allows it to return to a circular, open configuration." Col. 16, lines 52-53, 55-57. If Lau's method of folding the stent-graft resulted in the claimed step of "creasing" the stent-graft, then Lau's stent-graft would not have *returned* to a *circular* configuration. Lau therefore not only fails to disclose or suggest creasing at one longitudinal portion of said tubular supporting component, as is recited in claim 31, but Lau also *teaches away* from creasing the stent-graft of his invention.

Because Lau fails to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claim 31, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 31 is in error, and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claim. Claims 32-35 all ultimately depend from claim 31 and Applicants respectfully submit that claims 32-35 are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 31. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 32-35 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In light of the above arguments, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 31-39 are in condition for allowance. Prompt notification of same is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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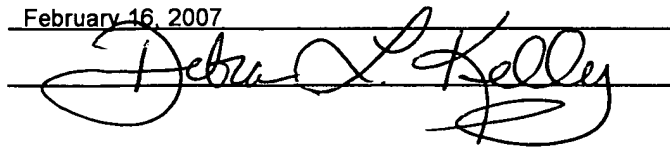
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